

What is claimed is:

1. A stuffing tube for a meat encasing machine, comprising:  
an elongated hollow tube having an outer surface and a center  
5 bore with a discharge end adapted to receive meat  
emulsion in the bore for discharge through the discharge  
end;  
the bore being surrounded by a cylindrical wall,  
an annular open chamber in the cylindrical wall, and  
10 a plurality of spaced openings extending between the  
annular open chamber and the outer surface of the hollow  
tube and being adapted for connection to a source of  
fluid so that fluid could pass from the cylindrical open  
chamber to the outer surface of the hollow tube to serve  
15 as a lubricant to facilitate the sliding movement of a  
tubular casing on the outer surface during a sausage  
encasing operation.
2. The stuffing tube of claim 1 wherein the spaced openings  
20 decrease in size as they near the discharge end.
3. A method of advancing a natural casing along the length  
of hollow meat stuffing tube, comprising:  
placing a hollow natural casing on the outside surface of a  
25 hollow stuffing tube having a meat emulsion discharge  
end,  
placing a follower against a upstream end of the natural  
casing to slide the natural casing forwardly along the  
stuffing tube towards a discharge end, and  
30 projecting jets of water towards and against a downstream  
portion of the casing to slidably propel the casing

longitudinally in an downstream direction towards the discharge end.

4. A system for advancing a natural casing along the length  
5 of a hollow meat stuffing tube having a discharge end comprising:

a casing slidably engaging the hollow meat stuffing tube;  
a nozzle manifold having spaced openings adapted to project  
fluid against the casing so as to cause the casing to  
10 slidably propel longitudinally in an downstream direction toward the discharge end of the stuffing tube; and  
a fluid source fluidly connected to the nozzle manifold.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the fluid projected is  
15 water.

6. The system of claim 4 wherein the fluid projected is air.